

The Crucible
By Arthur Miller

ACT 2

The common room of Proctor's house, eight days later.

At the right is a door opening on the fields outside. A fireplace is at the left, and behind it a stairway leading upstairs. It is the low, dark, and rather long living room of the time. As the curtain rises, the room is empty. From above, Elizabeth is heard softly singing to the children. Presently the door opens and John Proctor enters, carrying his gun. He glances about the room as he comes toward the fireplace, then halts for an instant as he hears her singing. He continues on to the fireplace, leans the gun against the wall as he swings a pot out of the fire and smells it. Then he lifts out the ladle and tastes. He is not quite pleased. He reaches to a cupboard, takes a pinch of salt, and drops it into the pot. As he is tasting again, her footsteps are heard on the stair. He swings the pot into the fireplace and goes to a basin and washes his hands and face. Elizabeth enters.

ELIZABETH: What keeps you so late, John? It's almost dark.

PROCTOR: I were planting far out to the forest edge.

ELIZABETH: Oh, you're done then.

PROCTOR: Aye, the farm is seeded. The boys asleep?

ELIZABETH: They will be soon. (Serves him stew .)

PROCTOR: I think we'll see green fields soon. It's warm as blood beneath the clods.

ELIZABETH: Oh, That's well.

PROCTOR: If the crop is good I'll buy George Jacob's heifer. How would that please you?

ELIZABETH: Aye, it would.

PROCTOR: I mean to please you, Elizabeth.

ELIZABETH: ... I know it, John.

PROCTOR: On Sunday, let you come with me, and we'll walk the farm together. I never see such a load of flowers on the earth. Massachusetts is a beauty in the spring.

ELIZABETH: Aye, it is.

PROCTOR: I think you're sad again. Are you?

ELIZABETH: You come so late I thought you'd gone to Salem this afternoon.

PROCTOR: Why? I have no business in Salem.

ELIZABETH: You did speak of goin', earlier this week.

PROCTOR: I thought better of it, since.

ELIZABETH: Mary Warren's there today.

PROCTOR: Why'd you let her? You heard me forbid her go to Salem anymore!

ELIZABETH: I couldn't stop her.

PROCTOR: It is a fault, it is a fault, Elizabeth — you're the mistress of the house here, not Mary Warren.

ELIZABETH: She frightened all my strength away.

PROCTOR: How may that mouse frighten you, Elizabeth? You —

ELIZABETH: It is a mouse no more. I forbid her go, and she raises up her chin like the daughter of a prince, and says to me, —I must go to Salem, Goody Proctor, I am an official of the court!

PROCTOR: Court! What court?

ELIZABETH: Aye, it is a proper court they have now. They've sent four judges out of Boston, she says, weighty magistrates of the General Court, and at the head sits the Deputy Governor of the Province.

PROCTOR: (Astonished.) Why, she's mad.

ELIZABETH: I would to God she were. There be fourteen people in the jail now, she says. And they'll be tried, and the court have power to hang them too, she says.

PROCTOR: Ah, they'd never hang them

ELIZABETH: The Deputy Governor promise hangin' if they'll not confess, John. The town's gone wild, I think—she speak of Abigail and I thought she were a saint, to hear her. Abigail brings the other girls into the court. Folks are brought before them, and if they scream and howl and fall to the floor—the person's clapped in the jail for bewitchin' them. I think you must go to Salem, John. You must tell them it is a fraud.

PROCTOR: Aye, it is, it is surely.

ELIZABETH: Let you go to Ezekiel Cheever—he knows you well. And tell him what Abigail Williams said to you last week in her uncle's house. She said it had naught to do with witchcraft, did she not?

PROCTOR: Aye, she did, she did.

ELIZABETH: God forbid you keep that from the court, John; I think they must be told.

PROCTOR: Aye, they must, they must....It is a wonder they do believe her.

ELIZABETH: I would go to Salem now, John... let you go tonight.

PROCTOR: I'll think on it.

ELIZABETH: You cannot keep it, John.

PROCTOR: I know I cannot keep it. I say I will think on it!

ELIZABETH: Good then, let you think on it.

PROCTOR: I am only wondering how I may prove what she told me, Elizabeth. If the girl's a saint now, I think it is not easy to prove she's fraud, and the town gone so silly. She told it to me in a room alone—I have no proof for it.

ELIZABETH: You were alone with her?

PROCTOR: For a moment alone, aye.

ELIZABETH: Why, then, it is not as you told me.

PROCTOR: For a moment, I say. The others come in soon after.

ELIZABETH: Do as you wish, then.

PROCTOR: Woman. I'll not have your suspicion any more.

ELIZABETH: Then let you not earn it.

PROCTOR: You doubt me yet?!

ELIZABETH: John, if it were not Abigail that you must go to hurt, would you falter now? I think not.

PROCTOR: Now look you, Elizabeth ...

ELIZABETH: I see what I see, John.

PROCTOR: You will not judge me more, Elizabeth. Let you look to your own improvement before you go to judge your husband any more. I have forgot Abigail.

ELIZABETH: And I.

PROCTOR: Spare me! You forget nothin' and forgive nothin'. Learn charity, woman. Still an everlasting funeral marches around your heart. I cannot speak but I am doubted, every movement judged for lies ...

ELIZABETH: You are not open with me. You saw her with me, you saw her with a crowd, you said. Now you –

PROCTOR: I'll plead my honesty no more, Elizabeth.

ELIZABETH: John, I am only –

PROCTOR: No more! I should have roared you down when first you told me your suspicion. But I wilted, and, like a Christian, I confessed. Confessed! Some dream I had must have mistaken you for God that day. But you're not, you're not, and let you remember it! Let you look sometimes for the goodness in me, and judge me not.

ELIZABETH: I do not judge you. The magistrate sits in your heart that judges you. I never thought you but a good man, John, only somewhat bewildered.

PROCTOR: Oh, Elizabeth, your justice would freeze beer. (enter Mary) Mary Warren, how dare you go to Salem when I forbid it? Do you mock me? I'll whip you if you dare leave this house again!

MARY: I am sick, I am sick, Mister Proctor. Pray, pray hurt me not. My insides are all shuddery; I am in the proceedings all day, sir.

PROCTOR: And what of these proceedings here?-when will you proceed to keep this house as you are paid nine pound a year to do?-and my wife not wholly well?

MARY: I made a gift for you today, Goody Proctor. I had to sit long hours in a chair, and passed the time with sewing. Here, this doll. (Gives her a small doll.)

ELIZABETH: Why, thank you, Mary. It's a fair poppet.

MARY: We must all love each other now, Goody Proctor.

ELIZABETH: Aye, indeed we must.

PROCTOR: Mary. Is it true there be fourteen women arrested?

MARY: No, sir. There be thirty-nine now....

PROCTOR: What? (Mary sobs.)

ELIZABETH: Why, she's weepin'!

MARY: Goody Osburn...will hang!

PROCTOR: Hang! Hang, y'say?

MARY: Aye....

PROCTOR: The deputy Governor will permit it?

MARY: He sentenced her. He must-But not Sarah Good. For Sarah Good confessed, y'see.

PROCTOR: Confessed! To what?

MARY: That she – she sometimes makes a compact with Lucifer, and wrote her name in his black book—with her blood—and bound herself to torment Christians till God’s thrown down... and we all must worship Hell forevermore.

PROCTOR: But...surely you know what a jabberer she is. Did you tell them that?

MARY: Mister Proctor, in open court she near choked us all to death.

PROCTOR: How choked you?

MARY: She sent her spirit out.

ELIZABETH: Oh, Mary, Mary, ...

MARY: She tried to kill me many times, Goody Proctor!

ELIZABETH: Why, I never heard you mention that before.

MARY: I never knew it before. I never knew anything before. When she come into the court I say to myself, I must not accuse this woman, for she sleep in ditches, and so very old and poor... But then... then she sit there, denying and denying, and I feel a misty coldness climbin’ up my back, and the skin on my skull begin to creep, and I feel a clamp around my neck and I cannot breathe air; and then... then ... I hear a voice, a screamin’ voice, and it were my voice... and all at once I remembered everything she done to me!

PROCTOR: Why?—What did she do to you?

MARY: So many time, Mister Proctor, she come to this very door beggin’ bread and a cup of cider—and mark this—whenever I turned her away empty—she mumbled.

ELIZABETH: Mumbled! She may mumble if she’s hungry.

MARY: But what does she mumble? You must remember, Goody Proctor—last month—a Monday, I think—she walked away and I thought my guts would burst for two days after. Do you remember it?

ELIZABETH: Why... I do, think, but...

MARY: And so I told that to Judge Hathorne, and he asks her — “Goody Osburn,” says he, — “what curse do you mumble that this girl must fall sick after turning you away?” And she replies: “Why, your excellence, no curse at all; I only say my commandments; I hope I may say my commandments,” says she!

ELIZABETH: And that’s an upright answer.

MARY: Aye, but then Judge Hathorne say, — “Recite for us your commandments!” — and of all the ten she could not say a single one. She never knew no commandments, and they had her in a flat lie!

PROCTOR: And so condemned her?

MARY: Why, they must when she condemned herself.

PROCTOR: But the proof, the proof?

MARY: I told you the proof—it’s hard proof, hard as rock the judges said.

PROCTOR: You will not go to court again, Mary Warren.

MARY: I must tell you, sir, I will be gone every day now. I am amazed you do not see what weighty work we do.

PROCTOR: What work you do! It’s strange work for a Christian girl to hang old women!

MARY: I am an official of the court, they say, and...

PROCTOR: Official!

MARY: The Devil’s loose in Salem, Mister Proctor, we must discover ... (PROCTOR: Where’s my whip?) ... where he’s hiding!

ELIZABETH: John! John!

MARY: I saved your wife’s life today! (Silence. Proctor’s whip comes down.)

ELIZABETH: (Softly.) I am accused?

MARY: Somewhat mentioned.

ELIZABETH: Who accused me?

MARY: I am bound by law; I cannot tell it. I only hope Mister Proctor will not be so sarcastical no more. Four judges and the King’s deputy sat to dinner with us but an hour ago. I -- I would have you speak civilly to me from this out.

PROCTOR: Go to bed.

MARY: I’ll not be ordered to bed no more, Mister Proctor! I am eighteen and a woman, however single!

PROCTOR: Do you wish to sit up?—then sit up.

MARY: I wish to go to bed!

PROCTOR: Good night, then!

MARY: Good night. (She goes upstairs. He throws whip down.)

ELIZABETH: Oh, the noose, the noose is up!

PROCTOR: There'll be no noose...

ELIZABETH: Abigail wants me dead; I knew all week it would come to this!

PROCTOR: They dismissed it. You heard her say...

ELIZABETH: And what of tomorrow?-she will cry me out until they take me!

PROCTOR: Sit you down...

ELIZABETH: She wants me dead, John, you know it!

PROCTOR: I say sit down! Now, we must be wise, Elizabeth.

ELIZABETH: Oh, indeed, indeed!

PROCTOR: Fear nothing. I'll find Ezekiel Cheever. I'll tell him Abigail said it were all sport.

ELIZABETH: Oh, John, with so many in the jail, more than Cheever's help is needed now, I think. Would you favor me with this?-Go to Abigail.

PROCTOR: What have I to say to Abigail?

ELIZABETH: John... grant me this. You have a faulty understanding of young girls. There is a promise made in any bed...

PROCTOR: What promise?

ELIZABETH: Spoke or silent, a promise is surely made. And she may dote on it now-I am sure she does-and thinks to kill me, then to take my place. It is her dearest hope, John, I know it. There be a thousand names, why does she call mine? She thinks to take my place, John.

PROCTOR: She cannot think it.

ELIZABETH: John, have you ever shown her somewhat of contempt? She cannot pass you in the church but you will blush...

PROCTOR: I may blush for my sin.

ELIZABETH: I think she sees another meaning in that blush.

PROCTOR: And what see you? What see you, Elizabeth.

ELIZABETH: I think you be somewhat ashamed, for I am there, and she so close.

PROCTOR: When will you know me, woman? Were I stone I would have cracked for shame this seven month!

ELIZABETH: Then go to her and tell her she's a whore. Whatever promise she may sense-break it, John, break it.

PROCTOR: Good, then. I'll go.

ELIZABETH: Oh, how unwillingly.

PROCTOR: I will curse her hotter than the oldest cinder in hell. But pray, begrudge me not my anger.

ELIZABETH: Your anger! I only ask you –

PROCTOR: Woman, am I so base? Do you truly think me base?

ELIZABETH: I never called you base.

PROCTOR: Then how do you charge me with such a promise? That promise a stallion gives a mare I gave that girl!

ELIZABETH: Then why do you anger with me when I bid you break it?

PROCTOR: Because it speaks deceit, and I am honest! But I'll plead no more! I see now your spirit twists around the single error of my life, and I will never tear it free!

ELIZABETH: You'll tear it free – when you come to know that I will be your only wife, or no wife at all! She has an arrow in you yet, John Proctor. You know it well!

(Knocking at door.)

PROCTOR: Yes?

HALE: Good evening.

PROCTOR: Why, Mister Hale! Good evening to you, sir. Come in, come in.

HALE: I hope I do not startle you, Goodwife Proctor.

ELIZABETH: No-no, it's only that I heard no horse...

HALE: I hope you're not off to bed yet.

PROCTOR: No-no.... We are not used to visitors after dark, but you're welcome here. Will you drink cider, Mister Hale?

HALE: No, it rebels my stomach—I have some further traveling yet tonight. I will not keep you long, but I have some business with you.

PROCTOR: Business of the court?

HALE: (Hesitantly.) No... no, I come of my own, without the court's authority. Hear me. I know not if you are aware, but your wife's name is... mentioned in the court.

PROCTOR: We know it, sir. Our Mary Warren told us. We are entirely amazed.

HALE: This is a strange time, Mister. No man may longer doubt the powers of the dark are gathered in monstrous attack upon this village. There is too much evidence now to deny it. You will agree, sir?

PROCTOR: (Evading.) I... I have no knowledge in that line.

HALE: Aye. I thought, sir, to put some questions as to the Christian character of this house, if you'll permit me.

PROCTOR: Why, we... have no fear of questions, sir.

HALE: Good, then. In the book of record that Mister Parris keeps, I note that you are rarely in the church on Sabbath Day....

PROCTOR: My wife were sick this winter. I surely did come when I could, and when I could not I prayed in this house.

HALE: Mister Proctor, your house is not a church; your theology must tell you that.

PROCTOR: It does, sir, it does; and it tells me that a minister may pray to God without he have golden candlesticks upon the altar. I think, sometimes, the man dreams cathedrals, not clapboard meetin' houses.

HALE: Hmm. And yet, Mister, a Christian on Sabbath Day must be in church.... Tell me—you have three children.

PROCTOR: Aye. Boys.

HALE: How come it that only two are baptized?

PROCTOR: I like it not that Mister Parris should lay his hand upon my baby. I see no light of God in that man. I'll not conceal it.

HALE: I must say it, Mister Proctor; that is not for you to decide. The man's ordained, therefore the light of God is in him.

PROCTOR: What's your suspicion, Mr. Hale?

HALE: No, no, I have no –

PROCTOR: I nailed the roof upon the church, I hung the door –

HALE: Oh, did you! That's a good sign, then.

PROCTOR: It may be I have been too quick to bring the man to book, but you cannot think we ever desired the destruction of religion.

HALE: There is a softness in your record, sir, a softness.

ELIZABETH: I think, maybe, we have been too hard with Mister Parris. I think so. But sure we never loved the Devil here.

HALE: Do you know your commandments, Elizabeth?

ELIZABETH: I surely do. There be no mark of blame upon my life, I am a covenanted Christian woman, Mister Hale.

HALE: And you, Mister?

PROCTOR: I... am sure I do, sir.

HALE: Let you repeat them, if you will.

PROCTOR: ...The Commandments?

HALE: Aye.

PROCTOR: Thou shalt not kill.

HALE: Aye.

PROCTOR: Thou shall not steal. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's goods, nor make unto thee any graven image. Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord in vain; thou shalt have no any gods before me... thou shalt remember the Sabbath Day and keep it holy. Thou shalt honor thy father and mother. Thou shalt not bear false witnessThou shalt not make unto thee any graven image.

HALE: You have said that twice, sir.

PROCTOR: Aye.

ELIZABETH: Adultery, John.

PROCTOR: Aye! ... You see, sir, between the two of us we do know them all. I think it be a small fault.

HALE: Theology, sir, is a fortress; no crack in a fortress may be accounted small.

PROCTOR: There be no love for Satan in this house, Mister.

HALE: I pray it, I pray it dearly. (Rising.) Well, then, I'll bid you good night.

ELIZABETH: Mister Hale. I do think you are suspecting me somewhat?

HALE: Goody Proctor, I do not judge you. My duty is to add what I may to the Godly wisdom of the court. I pray you both good health and good fortune. Good night, sir. (Starts to leave.)

ELIZABETH: I think you must tell him, John.

HALE: What's that?

ELIZABETH: Will you tell him?

PROCTOR: I... I have no witness and cannot prove it, except my word be taken. But I know the children's sickness had naught to do with witchcraft.

HALE: Naught to do...?

PROCTOR: Mr. Parris discovered them sporting in the woods. They were startled, and took sick.

HALE: Who told you this?

PROCTOR: Abigail Williams.

HALE: Abigail!

PROCTOR: Aye.

HALE: Abigail Williams told you it had naught to do with witchcraft?

PROCTOR: Aye. She told me the day you came, sir?

HALE: Why did you keep this?

PROCTOR: I never knew until tonight that the world is gone daft with this nonsense.

HALE: Nonsense! Mister, I have myself examined Tituba, Sarah Good, and numerous others that have confessed to dealing with the Devil. They have confessed it.

PROCTOR: And why not, if they must hang for denyin' it? There are them that will swear to anything before they'll hang; have you never thought of that?

HALE: I... I have. I... I have indeed. And you... would you testify to this in court?

PROCTOR: I... had not reckoned with going into court.... But if I must I will.

HALE: Do you falter here?

PROCTOR: I falter nothing, but I wondered if my story will be credited in such a court. I am no fool, Mister.

HALE: Proctor, let you be open with me now, for I have a rumor that troubles me. It's said you hold no belief that there may even be witches in the world. Is that true, sir?

PROCTOR: I know not what I have said, I may have said it. I have wondered if there be witches in the world – although I cannot believe they come among us now.

HALE: Then you do not believe –

PROCTOR: I have no knowledge of it; the Bible speaks of witches, and I will not deny them.

HALE: And you, woman?

ELIZABETH: I... I cannot believe it.

HALE: You cannot!

PROCTOR: Elizabeth, you bewilder him!

ELIZABETH: I cannot believe the Devil may own a woman's soul, Mister Hale, when she keeps an upright way, as I have. I am a good woman, I know it; and if you believe I may do only good work in the world, and yet be secretly bound to Satan, then I must tell you, sir, I do not believe it.

HALE: But, woman, you do believe there are witches in –

ELIZABETH: If you think I am one, then I say there are none.

HALE: You surely do not fly against the Gospel, the Gospel...

PROCTOR: She believe in the Gospel, every word!

ELIZABETH: Question Abigail Williams about the Gospel, not myself!

PROCTOR: She do not mean to doubt the Gospel, sir, you cannot think it. This is a Christian house, sir, a Christian house.

HALE: God keep you both; let the third child be quickly baptized and go you without fail each Sunday into Sabbath prayer; and keep a solemn, quiet way among you. (Enter Giles Corey & Francis Nurse.)

COREY: John!

PROCTOR: Giles! Francis Nurse! What's the matter?

COREY: They take my wife.

NURSE: And my Rebecca.

PROCTOR: Rebecca's in the jail!

NURSE: John, Cheever come and take her in his wagon. We've only now come from the jail and they'll not even let us in to see them.

ELIZABETH: They've surely gone wild now, Mister Hale!

NURSE: My wife is the very brick and mortar of the church, Mister Hale—and Giles' wife, there cannot be a woman closer yet to God than Martha Corey.

HALE: How is Rebecca charged, Mr. Nurse?

NURSE: For murder, she's charged! —"For the marvelous and supernatural murder of Goody Putnam's babies." What am I to do, Mr. Hale?

HALE: Believe me, Mister Nurse, if your Rebecca be tainted, then nothing's left to stop the whole green world from burning. Let you rest upon the justice of the court; the court will send her home, I know it...

NURSE: You cannot mean she will be tried in the court!

HALE: Nurse, though our hearts break, we cannot flinch; these are new times, sir. There is a misty plot afoot so subtle we should be criminal to cling to old respects and ancient friendships. I have seen too many frightful proofs in court—the Devil is alive in Salem, and we dare not quail to follow wherever the accusing finger points!

PROCTOR: How may such a woman murder children?

HALE: Man, remember, until an hour before the Devil fell, God thought him beautiful in Heaven.

(A knock at the door.)

PROCTOR: Come in.

CHEEVER: Good evening to you, Proctor.

PROCTOR: Why... Mister Cheever. Good evening.

CHEEVER: Good evening, all. Good evening, Mister Hale.

HALE: Good evening.

PROCTOR: I hope you come not on business of the court?

CHEEVER: I do, Proctor, aye. I am clerk of the court now, y'know. Now believe me, Proctor, how heavy be the law, all its tonnage I do carry on my back tonight. I have a warrant for your wife.

PROCTOR: My wife Mister Hale, you said she were not charged!

HALE: I know nothin' of it. When were she charged, Mister Cheever?

CHEEVER: I am given sixteen warrant tonight, sir, and she is one.

PROCTOR: Who charged her?

CHEEVER: Why, Abigail Williams charge her.

PROCTOR: On what proof, what proof!

CHEEVER: Mister Proctor, I have little time.... The court bid me search your house, but I like not to search a house. So will you hand me any poppets that your wife may keep here.

PROCTOR: Poppets?

ELIZABETH: I never kept no poppets, not since I were a girl.

CHEEVER: I spy a poppet on the mantle, Goody Proctor.

ELIZABETH: (Gets doll.) Oh that.—Why, this is Mary's.

CHEEVER: Would you please to give it to me?

ELIZABETH: Has the court discovered a text in poppets now?

CHEEVER: Do you keep any others like this in this house?

PROCTOR: No, nor this one either till tonight. What signifies a poppet?

CHEEVER: Why, a poppet ... a poppet may signify Now, woman, will you please to come with me?

PROCTOR: She will not. Fetch Mary, Elizabeth.

ELIZABETH: Yes, John.

HALE: What signifies a poppet, Mister Cheever?

CHEEVER: Why, they say it may signify that she... (He lifts doll's skirt.) Why, this, this...

PROCTOR: What's there?

CHEEVER: Why... it is a needle! It is a needle, stuck into the doll!

PROCTOR: And what signifies a needle?

CHEEVER: Why, this go hard with her, Proctor, this—I had my doubts, Proctor. I had my doubts, but here's calamity. You see, Mr. Hale, it is a needle!

HALE: Why? What meanin' has it?

CHEEVER: The girl, the Williams girl, Abigail Williams, sir. She sat down to dinner in Reverend Parris' house tonight, and without word nor warnin', she falls to the floor. "Like a struck beast," he says, and screamed a scream that a bull would weep to hear. And he goes to save her, and stuck two inches in the flesh of her belly he draw a needle out. And demandin' of her how she come to be so stabbed, she testify it were your Goody Proctor's familiar spirit pushed it in.

PROCTOR: Why, she done it herself! I hope you're not takin' this for proof, Mister Hale.

CHEEVER: 'Tis hard proof.—I find here a poppet Goody Proctor keeps. I have found it, sir. And in the belly of the poppet a needle is stuck. I never warranted to see such proof of Hell, and I bid you obstruct me not, for I... (Elizabeth and Mary enter.)

PROCTOR: Here now! Mary Warren, how did this poppet come into my house?

MARY: What poppet's that, sir?

PROCTOR: This poppet, this poppet here.

MARY: Why, I... I think ...

PROCTOR: It is your poppet, is it not?

MARY: I think it is mine. It is, sir.

PROCTOR: And how did it come into this house?

MARY: Why... I made it in the court, sir. I give it to Goody Proctor tonight.

HALE: Mary Warren, a needle have been found inside this poppet.

MARY: Why, I meant no harm by it, sir.

PROCTOR: You stuck that needle in yourself?

MARY: I... I believe I did, sir, I...

PROCTOR: What say you now, Mister Hale?

HALE: Child... you are certain this be your natural memory?—may it be, perhaps, that someone conjures you even now to say this?

MARY: Conjures me?—Why, no, sir, I am entirely myself, I think. Let you ask Susanna Wallcott—she saw me sewin' it in court. Ask Abby, Abby sat beside me when I made it.

HALE: Mary... you charge a cold and cruel murder on Abigail.

MARY: Murder! I charge no...

HALE: Abigail were stabbed tonight; a needle were found stuck into her belly....

ELIZABETH: And she charges me?!

HALE: Aye.

ELIZABETH: Why...!—The girl is murder! She must be ripped out of the world!

CHEEVER: You've heard that, sir!—"Ripped out of the world!" You heard it!

PROCTOR: Give me the warrant!

CHEEVER: Proctor, dare not touch that warrant.

PROCTOR: Daren't I? (He tears the warrant in half.) Out with you!

CHEEVER: You've ripped the Deputy Governor's warrant, man!

PROCTOR: Damn the Deputy Governor! Out of my house!

HALE: Now, Proctor, Proctor...

PROCTOR: Get y' gone with them! You are a broken minister.

HALE: Proctor, if she is innocent the court...

PROCTOR: If she is innocent! Why do you never wonder if Parris be innocent, or Abigail? Is the accuser always holy now? Were they born this morning as clean as God's fingers? I'll tell you what's walking Salem—vengeance is walking Salem. We are what we always were in Salem, but now the little crazy children are jangling the keys of the kingdom, and common vengeance writes the law! This warrant is vengeance; I will not give my wife to vengeance!

ELIZABETH: I'll go, John...

PROCTOR: You will not go!

CHEEVER: I have nine men outside. You cannot keep her. The law binds me, John, I cannot budge.

PROCTOR: Will you see her taken, Mister Hale?

HALE: Proctor, the court is just –

PROCTOR: Pontius Pilate! God will not let you wash your hands of this!

ELIZABETH: John... I think I must go with them. Mary... there is bread enough for the morning; you will bake in the afternoon. Help Mister Proctor as you were his daughter... you owe me that, and much more. (Takes Proctor's hand) John, when the children wake, speak nothing of witchcraft, it will frighten them.

PROCTOR: I will bring you home. I will bring you soon.

ELIZABETH: Oh, John, bring me soon!

PROCTOR: I will fall like an ocean on that court! Fear nothing, Elizabeth.

ELIZABETH: I will fear nothing. (He puts a shawl on her.) Tell the children I have gone to visit someone sick.... (She goes out.)

PROCTOR: Aye (Cheever chains Elizabeth.) Don't chain her. Damn you, man. You will not chain her! Off with them! I'll not have it. I will not have her chained!

COREY: And yet silent, minister? It is a fraud, you know it is a fraud! What keeps you man?

HALE: Mister Proctor...

PROCTOR: Out of my sight!

HALE: Charity, Proctor, Charity—what I have heard in her favor I will not fear to testify in court. God help me, I cannot judge her guilty nor innocent.... I know not. Only this consider—the world goes mad, and it profits nothing you should lay the cause to the vengeance of a little girl.

PROCTOR: You are a coward! Though you be ordained in God's own tears, you are a coward now!

HALE: Proctor, I cannot think God be provoked so grandly by such a petty cause. The jails are packed — our greatest judges sit in Salem now — and hangin's promised. Man, we must look to cause proportionate. Was there murder done, perhaps, and never brought to light? Abomination? Some secret blasphemy that stinks to Heaven? Think on cause, man, and let you believe that there is your only way when such confusion strikes upon the world. I shall pray God open up our eyes. (Hale exits.)

FRANCIS: I never heard no murder done in Salem.

PROCTOR: Leave me, Francis, leave me.

COREY: John... tell me, are we lost?

PROCTOR: Go home now, Giles. We'll speak on it tomorrow.

COREY: Let you think on it; we'll come early, eh?

PROCTOR: Aye. Aye. Go now, Giles, go.

COREY: Good night, then. Come, Francis.

MARY: Mister Proctor, very likely they'll let her come home once they're given proper evidence.

PROCTOR: You're coming to that court with me, Mary. You will tell it in the court.

MARY: I cannot charge murder on Abigail....

PROCTOR: You will tell the court how the poppet come here and who stuck the needle in.

MARY: She'll kill me for sayin' that! Abby'll charge lechery on you, Mister Proctor!

PROCTOR: (Stunned.) She's told you!

MARY: I have known it, sir. She'll ruin you with it, I know she will.

PROCTOR: Good. Then her saintliness is done with. We will slide together into our pit. You will tell the court what you know.

MARY: I cannot. They'll turn on me.

PROCTOR: (Grabs her.) You will. My wife will never die for us. I will bring your guts into your mouth, but that goodness will not die for me. Make your peace with it! Now Hell and Heaven grapple on our backs, and all our old pretense is ripped away — make your peace! (Throws her to floor.) Peace. It is a providence, and no great change; we are only what we always were, but naked now. Aye, naked! And the wind, God's icy wind, will blow!

MARY: (Sobbing, over and over saying — "I cannot, I cannot.")
CURTAIN FALLS.)